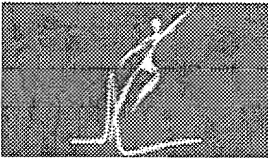


National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

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[Research literature](#)
[Press releases](#)

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[Publicaciones en español](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

A [ADHD](#)

[AIDS - Neurological Manifestations](#)

[Acquired Epileptiform Aphasia](#)

[Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis](#)

[Adrenoleukodystrophy](#)

[Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum](#)

[Agnosia](#)

[Aicardi Syndrome](#)

[Alexander Disease](#)

[Alpers' Disease](#)

[Alternating Hemiplegia](#)

[Alzheimer's Disease](#)

[Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis](#)

[Anencephaly](#)

[Aneurysm](#)

[Angelman Syndrome](#)

[Angiomatosis](#)

[Anoxia or Hypoxia](#)

[Aphasia](#)

[Apraxia](#)

[Arachnoid Cysts](#)

[Arachnoiditis](#)

[Arnold-Chiari Malformation](#)

[Arteriovenous Malformation](#)

[Asperger Syndrome](#)

[Ataxia Telangiectasia](#)

[Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder](#)

[Autism](#)

[Autonomic Dysfunction](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

B [Back Pain](#)

[Batten Disease](#)

[Behcet's Disease](#)

[Bell's Palsy](#)

[Benign Essential Blepharospasm](#)

[Benign Focal Amyotrophy](#)
[Benign Intracranial Hypertension](#)
[Binswanger's Disease](#)
[Blepharospasm](#)
[Bloch-Sulzberger Syndrome](#)

[Brachial Plexus Birth Injuries](#)
[Brachial Plexus Injuries](#)
[Brain Aneurysm](#)
[Brain Injury](#)
[Brain and Spinal Tumors](#)

[Brown-Sequard Syndrome](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

C [Canavan Disease](#)
[Carpal Tunnel Syndrome](#)
[Causalgia](#)
[Central Pain Syndrome](#)
[Cephalic Disorders](#)

[Cerebral Aneurysm](#)
[Cerebral Arteriosclerosis](#)
[Cerebral Atrophy](#)
[Cerebral Gigantism](#)
[Cerebral Palsy](#)

[Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disorder](#)
[Chiari Malformation](#)
[Chorea](#)
[Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy \(CIDP\)](#)
[Chronic Pain](#)

[Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome](#)
[Coffin Lowry Syndrome](#)
[Coma, including Persistent Vegetative State](#)
[Congenital Facial Diplegia](#)
[Corticobasal Degeneration](#)

[Cranial Arteritis](#)
[Craniosynostosis](#)
[Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease](#)
[Cumulative Trauma Disorders](#)
[Cushing's Syndrome](#)

[Cytomegalic Inclusion Body Disease \(CIBD\)](#)
[Cytomegalovirus Infection](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

D [Dancing Eyes-Dancing Feet Syndrome](#)

[Dandy-Walker Syndrome](#)
[Dawson Disease](#)
[De Morsier's Syndrome](#)
[Dejerine-Klumpke Palsy](#)

[Dementia - Multi-Infarct](#)
[Dementia With Lewy Bodies](#)
[Dermatomyositis](#)
[Diabetic Neuropathy](#)
[Diffuse Sclerosis](#)

[Dysautonomia](#)
[Dysgraphia](#)
[Dyslexia](#)
[Dystonias](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

E [Early Infantile Epileptic Encephalopathy](#)
[Empty Sella Syndrome](#)
[Encephalitis and Meningitis](#)
[Encephaloceles](#)
[Encephalotrigeminal Angiomatosis](#)

[Epilepsy](#)
[Erb's Palsy](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

F [Fabry's Disease](#)
[Fahr's Syndrome](#)
[Fainting](#)
[Familial Spastic Paralysis](#)
[Febrile Seizures](#)

[Fisher Syndrome](#)
[Friedreich's Ataxia](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

G [Gaucher's Disease](#)
[Gerstmann's Syndrome](#)
[Giant Cell Arteritis](#)
[Giant Cell Inclusion Disease](#)
[Globoid Cell Leukodystrophy](#)

[Guillain-Barre Syndrome](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

H [HTLV-1 Associated Myelopathy](#)
[Hallervorden-Spatz Disease](#)
[Head Injury](#)
[Headache](#)
[Hemifacial Spasm](#)

[Hemiplegia Alterans](#)
[Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia](#)
[Heredopathia Atactica Polyneuritiformis](#)
[Herpes Zoster Oticus](#)
[Herpes Zoster](#)

[Hirayama Syndrome](#)
[Holoprosencephaly](#)
[Huntington's Disease](#)
[Hydranencephaly](#)
[Hydrocephalus](#)

[Hypocortisolism](#)
[Hypoxia](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

I [Immune-Mediated Encephalomyelitis](#)
[Inclusion Body Myositis](#)
[Incontinentia Pigmenti](#)
[Infantile Phytanic Acid Storage Disease](#)
[Infantile Refsum Disease](#)

[Infantile Spasms](#)
[Inflammatory Myopathy](#)
[Intracranial Cysts](#)
[Intracranial Hypertension](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

J [Joubert Syndrome](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

K [Kearns-Sayre Syndrome](#)
[Kennedy Disease](#)
[Kinsbourne syndrome](#)

[Klippel Feil Syndrome](#)
[Krabbe Disease](#)

[Kugelberg-Welander Disease](#)
[Kuru](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

L [Landau-Kleffner Syndrome](#)
[Lateral Medullary Syndrome](#)
[Learning Disabilities](#)
[Leigh's Disease](#)
[Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome](#)

[Lesch-Nyhan Syndrome](#)
[Leukodystrophy](#)
[Lewy Body Dementia](#)
[Lissencephaly](#)
[Locked-In Syndrome](#)

[Lou Gehrig's Disease](#)
[Lupus - Neurological Sequelae](#)
[Lyme Disease - Neurological Sequelae](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

M [Machado-Joseph Disease](#)
[Macrencephaly](#)
[Megalencephaly](#)
[Melkersson-Rosenthal Syndrome](#)
[Meningitis](#)

[Menkes Disease](#)
[Metachromatic Leukodystrophy](#)
[Microcephaly](#)
[Miller Fisher Syndrome](#)
[Mini-Stroke](#)

[Mitochondrial Myopathies](#)
[Mobius Syndrome](#)
[Monomelic Amyotrophy](#)
[Motor Neuron Diseases](#)
[Moyamoya Disease](#)

[Mucopolysaccharidoses](#)
[Multi-Infarct Dementia](#)
[Multifocal Motor Neuropathy](#)
[Multiple Sclerosis](#)
[Multiple System Atrophy with Postural Hypotension](#)

[Muscular Dystrophy](#)
[Myasthenia Gravis](#)

[Myelinoclastic Diffuse Sclerosis](#)
[Myoclonic Encephalopathy of Infants](#)
[Myoclonus](#)

[Myopathy](#)
[Myotonia Congenita](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

N [Narcolepsy](#)
[Neurofibromatosis](#)
[Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome](#)
[Neurological Manifestations of AIDS](#)
[Neurological Sequelae Of Lupus](#)

[Neurological Sequelae Of Lyme Disease](#)
[Neuronal Ceroid Lipofuscinosis](#)
[Neuronal Migration Disorders](#)
[Niemann-Pick Disease](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

O [O'Sullivan-McLeod Syndrome](#)
[Occipital Neuralgia](#)
[Occult Spinal Dysraphism Sequence](#)
[Ohtahara Syndrome](#)
[Olivopontocerebellar Atrophy](#)

[Opsoclonus Myoclonus](#)
[Orthostatic Hypotension](#)
[Overuse Syndrome](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

P [Pain - Chronic](#)
[Paresthesia](#)
[Parkinson's Disease](#)
[Paromyotonia Congenita](#)
[Parry Romberg](#)

[Pelizaeus-Merzbacher Disease](#)
[Periodic Paralysis](#)
[Peripheral Neuropathy](#)
[Persistent Vegetative State](#)
[Pervasive Developmental Disorders](#)

[Phytanic Acid Storage Disease](#)
[Pick's Disease](#)

Pinched Nerve
Pituitary Tumors
Polymyositis

Porencephaly
Post-Polio Syndrome
Postherpetic Neuralgia
Postinfectious Encephalomyelitis
Postural Hypotension

Primary Lateral Sclerosis
Prion Diseases
Progressive Hemifacial Atrophy
Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy
Progressive Sclerosing Poliodystrophy

Progressive Supranuclear Palsy
Pseudotumor Cerebri

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

R [Ramsay Hunt Syndrome Type I](#)
[Ramsay Hunt Syndrome Type II](#)
[Rasmussen's Encephalitis](#)
[Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome](#)
[Refsum Disease - Infantile](#)

[Refsum Disease](#)
[Repetitive Motion Disorders](#)
[Repetitive Stress Injuries](#)
[Restless Legs Syndrome](#)
[Retrovirus-Associated Myelopathy](#)

[Rett Syndrome](#)
[Reye's Syndrome](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top of page](#)

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

S [Saint Vitus Dance](#)
[Salivary Gland Disease](#)
[Sandhoff Disease](#)
[Schilder's Disease](#)
[Schizencephaly](#)

[Seizure Disorder](#)
[Septo-Optic Dysplasia](#)
[Shaken Baby Syndrome](#)
[Shingles](#)
[Shy-Drager Syndrome](#)

[Sjogren's Syndrome](#)
[Sleep Apnea](#)

[Soto's Syndrome](#)[Spasticity](#)[Spina Bifida](#)[Spinal Cord Injury](#)[Spinal Cord Tumors](#)[Spinal Muscular Atrophy](#)[Stiff-Person Syndrome](#)[Stroke](#)[Sturge-Weber Syndrome](#)[Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis](#)[Subcortical Arteriosclerotic Encephalopathy](#)[Sydenham Chorea](#)[Syncope](#)[Syringomyelia](#)[Systemic Lupus Erythematosus](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

T [Tardive Dyskinesia](#)
[Tay-Sachs Disease](#)
[Temporal Arteritis](#)
[Tethered Spinal Cord Syndrome](#)
[Thomsen Disease](#)

[Thoracic Outlet Syndrome](#)[Tic Douloureux](#)[Todd's Paralysis](#)[Tourette Syndrome](#)[Transient Ischemic Attack](#)[Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies](#)[Transverse Myelitis](#)[Traumatic Brain Injury](#)[Tremor](#)[Trigeminal Neuralgia](#)[Tropical Spastic Paraparesis](#)[Tuberous Sclerosis](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

V [Vasculitis including Temporal Arteritis](#)
[Von Hippel-Lindau disease \(VHL\)](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

W [Wallenberg's Syndrome](#)
[Werdnig-Hoffman Disease](#)
[West Syndrome](#)
[Whiplash](#)
[Williams Syndrome](#)

[Wilson's Disease](#)

Select a letter to jump to the disorder... or return to [top](#) of page

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

Z [Zellweger Syndrome](#)

[Home](#) | [About NINDS](#) | [Disorders](#) | [Funding](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Find People](#) | [Jobs & Training](#) | [Accessibility](#)



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Directory Help

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Neurological Disorders

[Health > Conditions and Diseases > Neurological Disorders](#)
[Go to Directory Home](#)

Categories

[Alternating Hemiplegia \(3\)](#)
[Alzheimer's \(155\)](#)
[Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(72\)](#)
[Ataxia \(10\)](#)
[Autonomic Nervous System \(52\)](#)
[Brain Diseases \(186\)](#)
[Cerebral Palsy \(178\)](#)
[Chromosomal \(18\)](#)
[Chronic Fatigue Syndrome \(130\)](#)
[Chronic Pain Syndromes \(8\)](#)
[Congenital Anomalies \(105\)](#)
[Cranial Nerve Diseases \(55\)](#)
[Dementia \(69\)](#)
[Demyelinating Diseases \(285\)](#)

[Dysautonomia \(21\)](#)
[Epilepsy \(209\)](#)
[Facial Differences \(95\)](#)
[Headaches \(180\)](#)
[Huntington's Disease \(27\)](#)
[Hydrocephalus \(55\)](#)
[Infections \(65\)](#)
[Meningitis \(6\)](#)
[Movement Disorders \(163\)](#)
[Muscle Diseases \(135\)](#)
[Neoplasms \(23\)](#)
[Neurocutaneous Syndromes \(3\)](#)
[Neurodegenerative Diseases \(71\)](#)

[Neurologic Manifestations \(22\)](#)
[Neurotoxicity Syndromes \(12\)](#)
[Ocular Motility Disorders \(18\)](#)
[Parkinson's Disease \(71\)](#)
[Peripheral Nervous System \(199\)](#)
[Pituitary Disorders \(76\)](#)
[Porencephaly \(5\)](#)
[Rett Syndrome \(27\)](#)
[Sleep Disorders \(326\)](#)
[Spinal Cord \(28\)](#)
[Stroke \(82\)](#)
[Tourette Syndrome \(67\)](#)
[Trauma and Injuries \(318\)](#)

Related Categories:

[Health > Mental Health > Disorders > Neurodevelopmental \(741\)](#)
[Health > Medicine > Medical Specialties > Neurology \(268\)](#)
[Health > Conditions and Diseases > Communication Disorders \(357\)](#)

Web Pages

Viewing in Google PageRank order

View in alphabetical order

- [Hardin MD: Neurology & Neurosciences](http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/neuro.html) - <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/neuro.html>
 Lists of Internet sources in neurology, neurosurgery, and neurosciences, and nervous system diseases (brain, spine, nerves).
- [Brain.com](http://www.brain.com/) - <http://www.brain.com/>
 Information about the brain and brain health and fitness.
- [Neurological Disorders - MCW HealthLink](http://healthlink.mcw.edu/neurological-disorders/) - <http://healthlink.mcw.edu/neurological-disorders/>
 Information on neurological disorders from physicians of the Medical College of Wisconsin.
- [Neurological Disorders Resources](http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/disorders.html) - <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/disorders.html>
 Good descriptions of common neurological disorders from the University of Washington.
- [actionCNS](http://www.actioncns.com/index.asp) - <http://www.actioncns.com/index.asp>
 Comprehensive news, resources and links. Registration needed for some pages.
- [CNS Disorders - What's New?](http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/~rebhan/rp.html) - <http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/~rebhan/rp.html>
 Discoveries that were made starting with the year 2000 and going backwards. Done in point form with links to the articles pertaining to each subject matter.
- [Central Nervous System Diseases](#) -

<http://omni.ac.uk/text/browse/mesh/detail/C0007682L0007682.html>

An online tutorial from the Virtual Hospital collection, on infectious diseases of the CNS. Includes diseases which involve primarily the Meninges and those which are confined primarily to the Parenchyma.

[Neurology and Neurosurgery Forum](http://www.medhelp.org/Forums/neuro/) - <http://www.medhelp.org/Forums/neuro/>

Online medical forum, questions and answers, about neurological diseases and conditions. Located at Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

[Neurology Webforums at Massachusetts General Hospital](http://neuro-mancer.mgh.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/Ultimeate.cgi) - [http://neuro-](http://neuro-mancer.mgh.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/Ultimeate.cgi)

[mancer.mgh.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/Ultimeate.cgi](http://neuro-mancer.mgh.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/Ultimeate.cgi)

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Turning Blood into Brain: New Studies Suggest Bone Marrow Stem Cells Can Develop into Neurons in Living Animals

For release: Thursday, November 30, 2000



For years, researchers studying stem cells have been intrigued by the possibility that these cells might be used to treat brain diseases. Recent studies have suggested that neural stem cells transplanted into the brain can migrate throughout the brain and develop into other types of cells. Now, two new studies show that bone marrow cells transplanted into mice can migrate into the brain and develop into cells that appear to be neurons. The studies suggest that bone marrow may be a readily available source of neural cells with potential for treating such neurological disorders as Parkinson's disease and traumatic brain injury.

While previous research has shown that bone marrow cells can develop into neuron-like cells in culture, the new studies are the first to show that this process can also happen in living animals. The two studies reached the same conclusion despite many differences in how the studies were performed. The results are reported in the December 1, 2000, issue of *Science*.

"These are extraordinarily important studies, carefully done, with clear implications for brain disorders and for basic developmental biology," says Gerald D. Fischbach, M.D., director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

In the first study,¹ NINDS investigator Eva Mezey, M.D., Ph.D., and colleagues injected bone marrow cells from normal male mice into newborn female mice that had no white blood cells of their own. Using marrow from male mice allowed the researchers to use the Y chromosomes in the transplanted cells as a marker to distinguish them from native cells. At different time intervals, the researchers examined cells from the brains of seven mice that had received the transplants and compared them to littermates that had not received the transplants. By 4 months after the transplants, they found a significant number of neuronal cells in several brain regions, including the cortex, the hypothalamus, and the striatum, that were descendants of the transplanted cells. This suggests that stem cells from elsewhere in the body can enter the brain and differentiate into neuronal cells, says Dr. Mezey.

In the second study,² Helen Blau, Ph.D., and colleagues from Stanford University injected bone marrow from adult mice that express a marker called green fluorescent protein (GFP) into adult mice that had been irradiated to eliminate their bone marrow. They found that bone marrow-derived cells migrated into several regions of the brain, including the olfactory bulb, the cortex, the hippocampus, and the cerebellum. Some of the marrow-derived neuronal cells also grew long fibers and produced a protein that indicates cell activity. These results suggest that the marrow-derived neurons not only entered the brain but also responded to their environment and began to function like the native ones.

These studies suggest that bone marrow, which is an easily available source of cells, could be used as a source of neurons to replace those damaged or lost in neurological disorders, the researchers say. It might also be possible to genetically engineer the cells in ways that would help them survive or work in beneficial ways. The fact that even bone marrow from adult mice generated neuronal cells shows an unexpected amount of flexibility in older cells and suggests that patients with brain disorders could be treated with their own cells, says Dr. Blau. Bone marrow cells taken from a patient's own body would not be rejected by the body's immune system.

While the results are very promising, researchers need to answer many remaining questions before marrow-derived neural cell therapies can be tested in humans. A key question is what growth factors and other signals prompt the bone marrow cells to develop into specific types of neurons. If researchers can describe how the normal process of cell differentiation works, they may be able to reproduce it in patients with disorders such as brain injury or Parkinson's disease where neurons are not normally replaced. Researchers might also be able to discover factors that help cells enter the brain or connect with other cells. "We need much more data, but I think it's a pretty encouraging start," says Dr. Mezey.

Since the studies used whole bone marrow, it is important to determine which population of bone marrow cells develop into neurons, the researchers say. Other questions for future studies include whether marrow-derived neurons function like normal neurons and if they can make appropriate connections with other cells. The

findings in Science should speed the pace of research to answer these and other important questions, the researchers say. However, they believe it will be several more years before the results reported in these studies will lead to effective therapies.

The NINDS, part of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, is the nation's leading supporter of research on the brain and nervous system. The NINDS is now celebrating its 50th anniversary.

¹Mezey, E., Chandross K.J., et. al. "Turning Blood into Brain: Cells Bearing Neuronal Antigens Generated in Vivo from Bone Marrow." *Science*, Vol. 290, December 1, 2000, pp. pp. 1779-1782.

²Brazelton, T.R., Rossi, F.M.V., et.al. "From Marrow to Brain: Expression of Neuronal Phenotypes in Adult Mice from Adult Bone Marrow-Derived Cells." *Science*, Vol. 290, December 1, 2000, pp. 1775-1779.

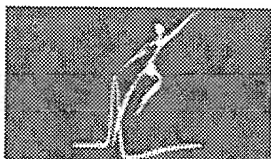
Image description: Photograph of a neuronal cell derived from bone marrow. The green spot indicates the Y chromosome which distinguishes this cell from innate cells. Science/Dr. Eva Mezey, NINDS.

Reporters: for more information contact Natalie Frazin or Margo Warren, NINDS Office of Communications and Public Liaison, at 301-496-5751.

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National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

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NINDS Parkinson's Disease Information Page

Reviewed 08-17-2001

[Get Web page suited for printing](#)[Email this to a friend or colleague](#)**Table of Contents (click to jump to sections)**[What is Parkinson's Disease?](#)[Is there any treatment?](#)[What is the prognosis?](#)[What research is being done?](#)[Organizations](#)[Related NINDS Publications and Information](#)[Additional resources from MEDLINEplus](#)**What is Parkinson's Disease?**

Parkinson's disease belongs to a group of conditions called motor system disorders. Parkinson's and related disorders are the result of the loss of dopamine-producing brain cells. Dopamine is a chemical messenger responsible for transmitting signals within the brain. Parkinson's disease occurs when certain nerve cells, or neurons, die or become impaired. Normally, these neurons produce dopamine. Loss of dopamine causes the nerve cells to fire out of control, leaving patients unable to direct or control their movement in a normal manner. The four primary symptoms of Parkinson's are tremor or trembling in hands, arms, legs, jaw, and face; rigidity or stiffness of the limbs and trunk; bradykinesia, or slowness of movement; and postural instability or impaired balance and coordination. Patients may also have difficulty walking, talking, or completing other simple tasks. The disease is both chronic and progressive. Parkinson's is not usually inherited. Early symptoms are subtle and occur gradually.

Is there any treatment?

A variety of medications provide dramatic relief from the symptoms, but no drug can stop the progression of the disease. In some cases, surgery is an appropriate treatment. Some doctors recommend physical therapy or muscle-strengthening exercises.

What is the prognosis?

At present, there is no way to predict or prevent Parkinson's disease.

What research is being done?

The NINDS supports a broad range of studies aimed at discovering the cause(s) of Parkinson's disease, finding better treatments, and ultimately preventing and curing the disorder. For more information, please visit the [Parkinson's Disease Research Web Site](#).

Organizations

American Parkinson Disease Association

1250 Hylan Blvd.

Suite 4B

Staten Island, NY 10305-1946

info@apdaparkinson.org
<http://www.apdaparkinson.org>
Tel: 718-981-8001 800-223-2732 Calif: 800-908-2732
Fax: 718-981-4399

National Parkinson Foundation
1501 N.W. 9th Avenue
Bob Hope Research Center
Miami, FL 33136-1494
mailbox@parkinson.org
<http://www.parkinson.org/>
Tel: 305-547-6666 800-327-4545 Fla: 800-433-7022
Fax: 305-243-4403

Parkinson Alliance
211 College Road East
3rd Floor
Princeton, NJ 08540
admin@parkinsonalliance.net
<http://www.parkinsonalliance.net>
Tel: 609-688-0870 800-579-8440
Fax: 609-688-0875

Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 4777
New York, NY 10163
<http://www.michaeljfox.org>
Tel: 212-213-3525

Parkinson's Action Network (PAN)
300 North Lee Street
Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22314
info@parkinsonsaction.org
<http://www.parkinsonsaction.org>
Tel: 800-850-4726 703-518-8877 Calif: 707-544-1994
Fax: 703-518-0673

Parkinson's Disease Foundation (PDF)
710 West 168th Street
New York, NY 10032-9982
info@pdf.org
<http://www.parkinsons-foundation.org>
Tel: 212-923-4700 800-457-6676
Fax: 212-923-4778

Parkinson's Institute
1170 Morse Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089-1605
outreach@parkinsonsinstitute.org
<http://www.parkinsonsinstitute.org>
Tel: 408-734-2800 800-786-2958
Fax: 408-734-8522

Parkinson's Resource Organization
74-090 El Paseo
Suite 102
Palm Desert, CA 92260-4135

copsca@gte.net
<http://www.parkinsonsresource.org>
Tel: 760-773-5628 310-476-7030 877-775-4111
Fax: 760-773-9803

Worldwide Education & Awareness for Movement Disorders (WE MOVE)
204 West 84th Street
New York, NY 10024
wemove@wemove.org
<http://www.wemove.org>
Tel: 800-437-MOV2 (6682) 212-875-8312
Fax: 212-875-8389

Related NINDS Publications and Information

- Parkinson's Disease: Hope Through Research
An informational booklet on Parkinson's Disease compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).
- La Enfermedad de Parkinson: Esperanza en la Investigacion
A Spanish-language public information booklet on Parkinson's disease/Informacion de la Enfermedad de Parkinson.
- Parkinson's Disease Research Agenda
NINDS Parkinson's Disease Research Agenda, March 2000.
- Parkinson's Disease Backgrounder
A backgrounder on Parkinson's disease.
- September 1999 Parkinson's Testimony
NINDS Director's September 1999 Congressional testimony on NIH Parkinson's disease research.
- Parkinson's Disease: A Research Planning Workshop
Summary of a 1995 Parkinson's disease research planning workshop sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.
- Researchers Find Genetic Links for Late-Onset Parkinson's Disease
December 2001 news summary on recent findings in Parkinson's disease genetics.
- Parkinsonian Symptoms Decrease in Rats Given Stem Cell Transplants
January 2002 news summary on embryonic stem cells used in a mouse model for Parkinson's disease.
- Workshop Summary: Cognitive and Emotional Aspects of Parkinson's Disease
Summary of a workshop, "Cognitive and Emotional Aspects of Parkinson's disease: Working Group Meeting", held January 25-26, 2001.
- Third Annual Udall Centers of Excellence for Parkinson's Disease Research Meeting
Summary of Third Annual Udall Centers for Parkinson's Disease Research meeting. NINDS, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, is the leading supporter of biomedical research on the brain and nervous system.
- Parkinson's Disease Research Web
An NIH disease specific web site to facilitate research on Parkinson's Disease. NINDS, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, is the leading supporter of biomedical research on the brain and nervous system.
- Myoclonus
Myoclonus fact sheet compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).
- Tremor
Tremor information sheet compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

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